REVIEW ESSAY

Decorum and Desire: Dance in Renaissance Europe and the Maturation of a Discipline

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THE PAST THIRTY years have been an exciting period for early dance research. The field has expanded in the issues being considered, studied, and researched, and the relationship of dance history with other disciplines in the social and intellectual history of early modern Europe has deepened. It has come a long way from its position in the mid-twentieth century when it was seen more as a small part of historical musicology rather than as a discipline in its own right. While building on a solid foundation provided by the translation and editing of key choreographic treatises, and the reconstruction and performance of these recorded choreographies, researchers now investigate early dance as part of wider artistic practices and contemporary intellectual movements. With the gradual rediscovery and subsequent analysis of surviving records of dance activity, previously held assumptions have been challenged, and dance practices in early modern Europe are now known to be more complex and nuanced than previously thought. For example, while some dance genres were unique to a particular location, others such as the pavane and galliard or the *moresca* were performed throughout Europe. In the case of the *moresca*, the characteristics of danced performances with this name varied widely, particularly between Italy and Northern Europe. As Barbara Sparti's "The Danced *Moresca*" and "*Moresca* and *Mattaccino*," and John Forrest's *The History of Morris Dancing* has demonstrated, the conflation of accounts from Northern Europe with those from Italy, as well as accounts of *moresche* performed by members of the elite as opposed to performances by artisans and craftsmen, has led to a confusion regarding the origins of this dance type, and a misunderstanding as to its significance and what it symbolized.

Dance in early modern Europe was actively engaged in by all levels of society. Thus research into past practices has implications for many areas of historical inquiry: music, theater, festivals, visual arts, costume, gesture, literature, garden design, political processes, and intellectual movements, as well as questions of identity, order, and moral virtue. While this broader concern is a strength, it also

This essay is dedicated to the memory of Barbara Sparti (1932–2013), who contributed so much to the development of early dance, and who never stopped questioning the boundaries of the discipline.

Renaissance Quarterly 68 (2015): 597–612 © 2015 Renaissance Society of America.

https://doi.org/10.1086/682438 Published online by Cambridge University Press

means that early dance scholars often present the results of their research at conferences and in journals from widely disparate disciplines. There have only been three major international conferences devoted to dance pre-1900 in the past thirty years: one at Pesaro in 1987, one in Ghent in 2000, and one in London in 1996 focused solely on Baroque dance; each of these generated a significant essay collection.[1] (A notable exception is the annual dance and music symposium held at Oxford, now in its sixteenth year, organized by Michael Burden and Jennifer Thorp. Each year the symposium explores different aspects of dance and its social and artistic contexts from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth century, a slightly later time frame from that being considered in this essay.)

Early dance research owes a great deal to three of its pioneering scholars, Ingrid Brainard, Julia Sutton, and Barbara Sparti, all of whom were both teachers and performers as well as researchers. The reconstruction and performance of surviving choreographies was, and still is, important to the development of the discipline, and the dialogue between performing artists and researchers continues to invigorate early dance research and performance, as illustrated by Sparti's "'Oh, East Is East'" and Catherine Turocy's "Recovering Dance Theory." While early dance research began more closely aligned with the disciplines of historical musicology and social history, over the last three decades it has been influenced by the growth in modern dance studies and its different emphases, research methods, and theoretical approaches. Early dance now lies (sometimes uneasily) between history and contemporary dance studies. The debate has resonated in academic journals and in the introductions to scholarly monographs. Many early dance scholars, who recognize the large gaps that still exist in our knowledge of dance practices 300 to 500 years ago, would agree with Marion Kant's position that while "it is necessary to choose a theoretical frame . . . not all theories can help to understand the material and not all theories are suitable for every historical research project." They would also endorse her statement that "postmodern theories, drawn from the sensibilities of the mid- to late twentieth century can often be anachronistic when imposed mechanically on earlier periods."[2] The most influential studies on early modern dance that use twentieth-century theoretical frameworks are those by Mark Franko.

Part of the growing maturity of early dance research is the changing way in which choreographic sources for an event are now viewed by modern scholars. In the past choreographic descriptions of danced spectacles (of which there are not many) were considered by musicologists and historians as less reliable than literary, musical, or visual sources, probably because choreographic descriptions were written by a dance master rather than a humanist-educated court secretary, and were therefore seen as riddled with errors. Furthermore, before modern

[1]Padovan; Ravelhofer, 2000a; Ralph; McCleave.

[2]Kant, 109.

https://doi.org/10.1086/682438 Published online by Cambridge University Press

scholars can analyze these choreographies the written description must be turned into a sequence of movement patterns for a number of dancers over time. This is a complex task. With the growing number of detailed choreographic and musical analyses and then practical reconstructions, attitudes have changed, as exemplified by the studies by Nina Treadwell and Jennifer Nevile's "Cavalieri's Theatrical *ballo*" that examine the *intermedi* that accompanied *La pellegrina* performed in Florence in 1589. Celebratory events such as those in Florence in 1589 are often reported in several conflicting accounts. The accuracy of surviving written and visual accounts of a festive event and the need to carefully evaluate each account take center stage in R. J. Knecht's "Water Festivals of the Reign of Charles IX of France," celebrations that included several, separate dance performances. His conclusion that the memoir of Marguerite de Valois is the least reliable account of these events from 1564 to 1565 is important for dance historians because Marguerite's account includes the description of performances of named French provincial dances in the open fields leading to the banqueting place, details which appear in no other source. Marguerite's memoirs, however, only started to be written in 1594 thirty years after the event and when she had no archival documents to aid her memory. Knecht concludes that perhaps her work should be better viewed as "a colourful flight of the imagination designed to give life to an otherwise sparse account of her childhood."[3]

Guglielmo Ebreo, dance master in Quattrocento Italy, proudly asserts in his treatise on the art of dancing that any dance student who has diligently studied all the exercises provided by him will be able to dance perfectly any German, Greek, or Slavonic (that is, Croat) dance, or indeed any dance from whatever country he wishes. As far as Guglielmo was concerned, different regions of Europe had different identifiable styles of dance. Studies on individual genres such as the galliard or the French *basse danse*, or on an individual dance treatise, have helped our understanding of the different choreographic structures and national or regional styles that existed across Europe at this time. So too have studies on the dance practices from a single country.[4] Building on such studies, and on the research of cultural historians on clothing, self-presentation, social status, and national identity, dance scholars have recently started investigating exactly what was used in early modern Europe to identify national or regional dance styles: choreographic structure; the step vocabulary employed; the accompanying music; the clothes worn by the dancers; the gestures they used and their posture while dancing; the precise manner in which steps common across Europe, such as the single and double step, were performed in different

[3]Knecht, 76.

[4]Sparti, 1995 and 2009; Wilson; Sparti, 2004; Brooks, 2003; Ravelhofer, 2000b; Brooks, 1988; Pontremoli and La Rocca; Sparti, 1993; McGowan, 2008.

https://doi.org/10.1086/682438 Published online by Cambridge University Press

areas; and the significance of this differentiation between dance styles. Examples of such studies are Marina Nordera's "The Exchange of Dance Cultures" and Nevile's "Dance and Identity." The question of how dance could and did represent a group identity lies at the heart of Cecilia Nocilli's study of dance in the Aragonese kingdom in Southern Italy from 1442 to 1502, *Coreografare l'identità*.

While dancing was a pastime enjoyed by all levels of society in early modern Europe, the practices of the elite have been the focus of the majority of the studies by modern scholars. One pragmatic reason is that these practices are far better documented than dancing at the lower levels of society. But more importantly, at this time elite dance was part of the political process. It was also believed to have ethical properties, as dance — especially when combined with music and poetry — was seen as a reflection of the harmony of the universe, thereby having the power to order, or harmonize, the souls of those who watched.

In Renaissance Europe, members of the elite danced at social gatherings, in private, domestic spaces among close family members, and in public at official celebrations and festivities. They also performed in more theatrical settings, disguised as mythological heroes or gods, or fantastically costumed creatures. Single-sexed dancing did occur, but the vast majority of the choreographed dances were for both men and women, and the interactions between the dancers during the course of these choreographies chronicle the interaction between the two genders. Dance was a vehicle for expressing desire, a point continually hammered by its opponents yet openly accepted — even celebrated — in descriptions of dancing found in chronicles and other documents, as illustrated by the anonymous poem describing the outdoor dance organized in honor of Galeazzo Maria Sforza's visit to Florence in 1459.

> That joyful dance seemed like a paradise
> of dancing angelic hierarchies,
> and everyone was full of joy and laughter.
> . . . .
> I believe that the great and worthy ladies
> made a thousand fires burn on that day
> without tinder-box, flint, sulphur, or wood.
> Venus used all her tricks on that day because
> everyone makes merry in an amorous disposition
> without any thought that anything might be harmful.
> Some dance, others sport, others jest,
> some stare at people and others are stared at,
> some are objects of desire, and others desire.[5]

[5]Translated by Giovanni Carsaniga in Nevile, 2004, 152.

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Yet, conversely, the dances of the elite were also a vehicle for the expression of social order and decorum and moral virtue: "Decorum was the overriding rule; it determined who danced with whom, the order of the dancing, what dances should be performed in public, and those allowed for private entertainment. . . . At court, dancing was practised according to a well-established hierarchy. . . . Everyone understood this ritual, and any deviation from the expected order aroused comment and speculation."[6]

Part of the expansion of studies in early dance is the recognition of, and attention to, the multiple layers of meaning contained in the dance performances. Margaret M. McGowan's monograph on dancing in sixteenth-century France, *Dance in the Renaissance*, is a leading example of this development, as she discusses dance in its social, political, educational, intellectual, and aesthetic contexts, presenting a powerful picture of how seriously dance was considered in France, and its centrality to life both inside and outside the court. In "War and Seduction," her detailed study on the 1573 *Ballet des Polonais* (*Ballet of the Poles*), Ewa Kociszewska demonstrates how much can be revealed when all types of sources are taken into account, along with a thorough understanding of the immediate political situation, even when no specific choreographic text survives. The 1573 banquet and ballet held in the Tuileries garden were part of the festivities in honor of the Polish embassy to celebrate the election of Henri de Valois to the Polish throne. Kociszewska shows that all parts of the festivities — the motifs in the Latin and French poetic texts and their interrelated references to specific classical literary works, the images on the triumphal arches, the songs and dancing of the French ladies, the martial metaphors used in the description of the ballet, the dancers' costumes, the scenography, and even the outdoor garden setting itself — worked together to produce the desired political messages and images of Henri and Catherine de' Medici, which the latter so dearly wanted.

Kate van Orden's monograph *Music, Discipline and Arms in Early Modern France* is another excellent example of the insights to be gained from considering dance in a wider context, in this case together with music and the equestrian arts closely connected to dance: fencing and horse ballets. Her book, which mostly "evolved from a desire to explain the primacy of rhythm, meter, and dance in French music," clearly demonstrates that "understanding how rhythm was believed to affect the body and its passions makes possible a more pointed analysis of dance as a moral practice relevant to the civilizing process."[7] As van Orden explains, dance lessons for the nobility began at an early age and provided the strength and basic training for later studies (for males) in fencing and riding. While only occasionally did the same master teach both arts, lessons in dance

[6]McGowan, 2008, 21.
[7]van Orden, 34, 83.

https://doi.org/10.1086/682438 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and fencing often occurred in the same galleries "where the geometric patterns on the floor helped students measure the size of their steps. Both arts sensitized the student to the slightest gestures of others, taught them to judge their proximity to dance partners or fencing opponents, and gave them mastery of their physical surroundings."[8] Yet, as Sydney Anglo points out, while "masters of arms and teachers of dancing were experimenting with movement notation," the representations of dancers in the published dance treatises remained very unadventurous: "there is nothing in Renaissance dance treatises which even approaches the complexity and sophistication of Thibault's analysis of movement in his *Académie de l'espée* (1630)."[9] Anglo explores the connections between courtly dance and the martial arts in his article "The Barriers," and in his book *L'escrime, la danse et l'art de la guerre* through the lens of the different methods used to represent movement in the treatises of the two arts.

From the fifteenth century onward the dances performed by the elite at social occasions, court balls, and as part of theatrical danced spectacles were, with a few exceptions, choreographed by dance masters, with each dance a unique arrangement of steps, floor patterns, and music. Scholars are now beginning to recognize that dance masters were influenced by the larger artistic considerations prevalent in contemporary society, either in the construction of their choreographies for the ballroom or as part of a multimedia spectacle. In "'Rules for Design'" Nevile argues that, when revising his *balletti*, the sixteenth-century Italian dance master Fabritio Caroso was concerned to provide a theory or rules for designing choreographies that were articulated and written down, and, even more importantly, conformed to the prevailing theory of beauty. This ideal was achieved by an arrangement of elements in such a way that they were well proportioned, with all the parts harmonizing with each other. When designing their choreographies for a spectacle, dance masters had to work with other artists — poets, musicians, costume designers, stage and set designers — so that the message conveyed by a theatrical spectacle was consistent throughout all of its parts. In *La danse à la Renaissance* McGowan focuses on danced theatrical events, as she traces the practical applications of the theoretical idea of universal harmony on the choreographies devised for the French court in the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries. She also discusses how the discovery (by Europeans) of new and exotic lands — and the publications describing these new countries and the customs, including dance, of their inhabitants — influenced the dance masters, and how the strange and exotic visions inspired by the discovery of these new worlds were expressed in dance: "With the help of the scenic artist and composer, the choreographer wanted to open up previously

[8]Ibid., 91–92.

[9]Anglo, 2007, 91–92.

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inaccessible horizons in order to emphasize the ability of each dancer to extend his skills, vary his steps, risk new poses and multiple *cabrioles* and *entrechats*."[10]

Another recent development in studies on early modern dance is the exploration of how the fifteenth-century Italian dance masters interacted with contemporary intellectual concerns, putting forward arguments that the dance practice they advocated had to be understood through the mind as well as on a physical level, especially if the art of dance was to be included — through its association with music — among the liberal arts. As a liberal art, dance could lay claim to being a demonstration of eternal truths, a microcosm of the cosmos, thereby producing virtuous movements rather than lewd and morally repugnant ones. The response of the three Quattrocento Italian dance masters to the humanist environment in which they lived and worked is the focus of Nevile's *The Eloquent Body*. One major part of this response is the dance masters' passion for eloquent movements, echoing the humanists' passion for eloquence in spoken and written texts. Thus a large part of the specialized technical vocabulary developed by the dance masters dealt with descriptions of these elegant movements. In this monograph Nevile also demonstrates how Domenico da Piacenza laid out the intellectual basis of the art of dance so that it had the same numerical basis as music and the other mathematical arts of the quadrivium, and how this numerical basis, or *misura* (proportion), manifested itself practically in the choreographies performed by the elite.

Alessandro Pontremoli also examines the intellectual concerns of the fifteenth-century Italian dance masters as revealed in their treatises. In the first half of "La sapienza dei piedi" Pontremoli argues that Domenico structured his treatise in a similar way to an academic disputatio, debating an Aristotelian theme: the movement of bodies. Domenico's use of a topos from the academic study of logic enabled him to present dance as an art worthy of being taught in pedagogical institutions. In the second part of this book chapter, Pontremoli examines Neoplatonic influences on Guglielmo Ebreo through his use of the term *armonia* (harmony).

In two versions of his dance treatise, Guglielmo Ebreo provides details of the events at which he was present and for which he provided choreographies. Many of these were important state occasions, festivities that lasted for several days and for which music, dancing, costume, the presentation of food, theatrical performances, chivalric displays, and the architectural space all played a part. The scholarly literature on such festive events and the way they were used by courts to project an image of themselves is large, but historians have increasingly

[10]McGowan, 2012, 79 (my translation): "Le chorégraphe voulait, avec l'aide de l'artiste et du musicien, ouvrir des horizons autrefois inaccessibles, pour insister sur la capacité de chaque danseur à étendre ses talents, varier ses pas, risquer de nouvelles poses et multiplier cabrioles et entrechats."

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focused their attention on the part dance played in contributing to the overall effect and to the messages the organizers and participants hoped would be conveyed to those watching. Two such volumes are J. R. Mulryne and Elizabeth Goldring's *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance* and *Europa Triumphans*, edited by J. R. Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Margaret Shewring. The essays in these publications include those that examine dance in well-known festivities, such as McGowan's examination of the diverse festivals produced for Henri III in 1574 and Nicolas Le Roux's reappraisal of Henri IIIs' court-centered displays of monarchical authority in *Europa Triumphans*; explore new lines of inquiry, such as Roger Savage's work on the staging, preparation, rehearsals, and stage managing of theatrical spectacles in Italy, France, and England; or investigate dance activity in less well-studied centers. The latter is illustrated by Sara Smart's discussion of dance at the Stuttgart court of the Dukes of Württemberg in the first two decades of the seventeenth century.

The accuracy of visual evidence for all forms of festivals can be questioned, even more so for images of danced performances, given the difficulty of capturing three-dimensional movements over time in a single, frozen image, or even in a series of several images. Henri Zerner takes up the challenge in his consideration of the images of horse ballets and danced *intermedi* from Italian courts of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Close attention to the dance components of a festival in conjunction with other events in the series of celebrations can help to reveal the connections between seemingly disparate elements, to elucidate the political function of the whole event and its overall direction, and to identify who was responsible for the thematic continuity. Such ramifications are clearly demonstrated in the work of Anne Daye on the festive cycle for the coming-of-age of Prince Henry (December 1609–January 1611), and, in particular, on the masque *Tethys Festival*, which was "integral to the solemnization of the creation of Prince Henry."[11]

The complex multimedia nature of European festivals, their diverse forms even when celebrating the same occasion, the significance of each particular event for the ruler and the court, and the implications for the civic authorities and leading merchants who often had to bear the financial and organizational burden of staging festive events are made clear in the collection of essays edited by McGowan entitled *Dynastic Marriages.* In this volume the contributions of specialists from a number of disciplines highlight the interactions of the various agencies responsible for the sequence of festive events, the international ramifications, the political maneuverings, and the practical problems that had to be overcome in the staging of the royal entries, ballets, a carrousel, firework displays, religious ceremonies, and dramatic productions. For example, the carrousel that took place over three days in 1612 is discussed in six essays by

[11]Daye, 26.

https://doi.org/10.1086/682438 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Marie Baudière, Monique Chatenet, Patrice Franchet d'Espèrey, Paulette Choné, McGowan, and Iain Fenlon. In her essay McGowan also discusses the 1615 *Ballet de Madame*, which was designed to pay homage to the Princess Elizabeth before she left for her journey to Spain. McGowan emphasizes the efforts of the French authorities to ensure "the maximum publicity for the magnificence and the political messages enacted in the ballet."[12] Dance also features in David Sánchez Cano's account of the Spanish festivities for Elizabeth, especially her entry into Madrid. This event was deemed to be insufficient by the court, and so the city council of Madrid was ordered "to organize dances and fireworks, as well as [to] set up stages for the dances along the entry route."[13]

The modern publication either in facsimile or in translation of the written, musical, and visual records of a danced spectacle or festive celebration such as a royal marriage provides a valuable resource for scholars, and is crucial to an understanding of the cultural context of the dance performances. Recent examples include the *Ballet de la Nuit* (*Ballet of the Night*) from 1653, edited by Michael Burden and Jennifer Thorp; the 1617 ballet de cour *La Délivrance de Renaud* (*The Deliverance of Renaud*), edited by Greer Garden; and the 1475 wedding of Costanzo Sforza and Camilla d'Aragona at Pesaro, edited and translated by Jane Bridgeman. All three publications are lavishly produced with many illustrations. The volume on the 1653 ballet de cour includes a facsimile of the *livret*, an edition of the music, essays on the political and artistic context, and an important essay by Thorp, "Dances and Dancers in the *Ballet de la Nuit*," in which she sets out what the surviving sources reveal about who danced in this ballet and what they danced. Equally valuable is the reproduction in full color of 129 costumes and scene designs.

Garden's publication also provides a facsimile reproduction and then an English translation of the *livret* compiled by Étienne Durand. This volume includes twelve plates depicting a moment from the dance entrées. A modern edition and transcription into staff notation of the vocal music and the dance music of the ballet follows the facsimile. Essays in French and English by various specialists give the historical context of the ballet and discuss its literary sources and inspiration as well as musical performance practice issues, together with a long illustrated essay on the hall, scenery and decorations, and the costumes of the dancers. There are three additional short essays: the first on the dance of the time in its social context, the second on the sources for dance music from the ballet de cour, and the third on the dancer and singer Marais, who portrayed Armide in the ballet.

Bridgeman provides an English translation of the original anonymous eyewitness account in Italian of the five days of wedding festivities. Her introduction includes

[12]McGowan, 2013b, 173.

[13]Sánchez Cano, 47.

https://doi.org/10.1086/682438 Published online by Cambridge University Press

biographical essays on the bride and groom. The translation follows, describing Camilla's entry into Pesaro, a splendid banquet where each course was announced by a different messenger from the gods, various dances both theatrical and social, the presentation of sugar castles that also involved dancing, a firework display, and a joust. Bridgeman also discusses the significance of the costumes and emblems of the messengers of the gods and other pageant vehicles encountered by Camilla during the course of her entry and the joust, the illustrations of which are all reproduced in color. Information on the wedding guests follows, and appendix 2 lists all the dishes of the twelve courses presented at the banquet, bringing together for modern readers information on the iconographic, gastronomic, musical, theatrical, and choreographic components of the celebrations.

Another emerging area of research is how a knowledge and understanding of ancient Greek dance types and classical writings on dance actually influenced early modern dance performances, as well as the more theoretical treatises and writings by fifteenth- and sixteenth-century dance masters and humanists. As Barbara Ravelhofer comments in "Ancient Greece, Dance, and the English Masque," the designers, poets, and performers of the English masques from 1604 to 1640 drew inspiration from classical sources when creating their dances, music, costumes, set designs, and poetic texts. In this book chapter Ravelhofer examines Thomas Campion's *The Lord Hay's Masque* from 1607, which is unusually rich in its surviving sources, and she argues that Campion was interested in "conveying a continuity of history in word, sound and image," rather than attempting to re-create a "dancing Greek chorus."[14] One of the strengths of Ravelhofer's work is that, while situating a masque performance in its wider social and political context, she also discusses how the costumes, the choreographies, the music, and the sets actually functioned in performance: for example, how the torch and candle light affected the costumes, or how the demands of the choreography affected the poet's choice of meter. The same applies to her monograph *The Early Stuart Masque*, where three chapters are specifically devoted to costume.

The development of a historical awareness in the writings of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century dance masters (Guglielmo Ebreo, the author of the "Il Papa" manuscript, Fabritio Caroso, Cesare Negri, Thoinot Arbeau, and Rinaldo Corso) is discussed by Pontremoli in "Fra mito e storia" in terms of their comments on the origins of dance and their references to dance in antiquity, while in "Sulle tracce del *Peri Orcheseos* di Luciano," Nordera concentrates on a single work in her study on the first-known European translation of Lucian's text *De saltatione* from the original Greek into Latin. The translation was commissioned by Antonello Petrucci, secretary of state to Ferrante d'Aragona, around 1472–73, the same time Guglielmo Ebreo was present in Naples.

[14]Ravelhofer, 2010, 223.

https://doi.org/10.1086/682438 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Nordera explores the influence of this translation on Petrucci's circle in Naples, and hypothesizes that Petrucci commissioned the translation because of his interest in promoting dance as part of the education of his sons. In "La danza nell'antiquaria rinascimentale," Alessandro Arcangeli's exploration of the interest in the development of the historical sense of dance in early modern Europe centers on the writings of Italian humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: Raffaele Maffei, Alessandro d'Alessandro, Ludovico Ricchieri, and Polidoro Virgilio. The works of these men, in which they describe ancient dance forms and practices as they understood them, were influential and were reprinted many times up until the 1700s.

The manner in which choreographers created meaning in their compositions is an important area for further research in early dance, because in Renaissance Europe dance masters, along with composers, painters and designers, sculptors, and poets, all shared the goal of creating meaning in their artistic creations. Choreographers had an interest in shapes and figures as a way of structuring their choreographies and encoding meaning, as well as an interest in choreographic choices made at the individual step level, and the use of individual steps to convey meaning if the choreographer so desired. Meaning could be conveyed by the use of steps or gestures that were outside the common step vocabulary, from a foreign dance practice, or by the use of movements closely associated with one gender by the other gender. But given the scarcity of surviving choreographic texts, it is a challenge for modern scholars to devise suitable research methods for investigating choreographic meaning that takes into account all surviving sources of information — literary, visual, musical, and choreographic — although Kociszewska's study mentioned above provides an excellent model.

The question of how dances were taught and how dance schools were run is another promising direction for future research. While a small number of legal contracts exist for the establishment of schools to teach dancing (or dancing and music) from the fifteenth century onward, there is still a great deal that remains to be discovered about how the classes were run, how the students were taught, what dances they studied, and who the pupils were and from what socioeconomic backgrounds they came. These are just a few of the questions that need more detailed answers. The whole question of the economic circumstances of dance teachers and choreographers during this period still remains largely unexplored, apart from the work of Katherine McGinnis on the sixteenth-century Italian dance master Cesare Negri.

Unlike modern and contemporary dance studies, investigation into the subject of emotion and early modern dance is still in its infancy. Even basic issues, large and small, remain unexplored. For example, can the dance practices of early modern Europe, both individual choreographies and danced spectacles, contribute to the investigation and understanding of how emotion shaped social and cultural life in this period? Are any specific emotions displayed in

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Renaissance dance, and if so which ones are and which are not? How did choreographers create the emotional content of their creations? Given the closeness of the two arts, did the expression of emotion in Renaissance dance relate to the way emotion was expressed in music? A related and important topic is the examination of gesture in early modern dance. During the Renaissance a person's gestures, movements, and bodily deportment were considered outward signs of his or her inner nature. How one moved on and off the dance floor, therefore, was not a trivial matter. Much useful work can be done in this area, building on the work of historians of gesture such as Dilwyn Knox and Herman Roodenburg, the latter of whom has investigated gesture, bodily posture, and dancing in the seventeenth-century Netherlands.

Research into the dance practices of early modern Europe has come a long way from its early focus on reconstruction and performance. Early dance research is now a dynamic field, one that intersects and connects with many other areas of historical study. In the Renaissance dance was woven into the fabric of everyday life for all levels of society, and this characteristic of dance is one reason why modern scholarly investigation into past practices opens many possibilities for cooperative research with historians whose expertise lies outside of dance, and will, I am sure, produce not only new choreographic discoveries, but also a greater and richer understanding of early modern European society in general.

https://doi.org/10.1086/682438 Published online by Cambridge University Press

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